

Dear Parent/Guardian(s):

February 28, 2014

Greetings! 7th grade Language Arts students will be beginning their large Research Project Unit soon. It will stretch over the entire month of March (approximately four weeks) and will affect students' Quarter 3 *and* Quarter 4 grade. **This unit will require a lot of organization, time management, strict deadlines, and hard work both in school and at home;** many of which are skills and duties that a few of our students still struggle with. The purpose of this letter is to communicate what is expected of each student, what the assignment will entail, and to ask each family to help provide support and assistance at home, when needed. Lastly, the purpose of this letter is to explain plans for my upcoming maternity leave and how it will impact your student.

The Research Unit will not only focus on the creation of a 5-paragraph essay, but it will help prepare students for what's expected of them in the future and teach them ways to collect credible sources, compile information without plagiarizing, cite sources properly, use appropriate transitions between ideas, and to compile research-based information that supports a strong 3-part thesis statement. Additionally, students will be learning about potential career interests they may have, after completing an electronic career survey that will help springboard our topic choices.

There are many ways that parents/guardians can help at home. One way would be to **keep track of upcoming deadlines and assignments** and to ask your son/daughter to show you his/her completed work the night before. I will be providing students with a Research Folder, in which they are expected to keep all research-related handouts and work. **You should expect to see this folder brought home on a nightly basis.** The attached handouts contain the projected due dates for each step of the unit. Also, weekly homework assignments are posted on Progress Book by Tuesday of each week, at the latest. By comparing your student's completed assignment to the "Step-by-Step Description" page of this handout (and/or by comparing it to the rubric, if one's been provided for that particular step), then students and parents alike can have a better idea assessing the quality of work that's been done and how many points he/she can expect to earn or lose on it. Another way parents can help is **by answering any questions your student may have about your particular profession.** Your son/daughter will be encouraged to have discussions with family members about their chosen career paths, experiences that led up to it, and day-to-day job duties that are included in it. He/she may even choose to interview one of you to serve as a credible source, if you happen to work in the field they've chosen to research. ☺ Your honest yet detailed candor about your work experience can greatly benefit your son/daughter for this project (and perhaps in their future profession too!).

It's important for students to realize that **deadlines exist for a reason.** Particularly when working on a research unit, students often find themselves easily overwhelmed when/if they miss a deadline. This tends to create what I refer to as the "domino effect". This unit will not allow students to "skip" steps without negatively affecting both their grade—and their overall paper. Each step is set-up to prepare for

the next step. Therefore, when one deadline (or step) is missed, a domino falls....thus knocking over the next domino (another missed deadline), and so on. I appreciate your assistance in emphasizing proactive efforts to avoid this from happening.

The last thing I'd like to use this opportunity to communicate to you is with regard to a more personal note: **my upcoming maternity leave**. As many of you have heard (or seen) already, my husband and I are expecting our first child around March 22. My goal is to continue teaching until that time, or for as long as possible. There is potential that my absence may extend through the end of the school year. Mrs. Patt will be my long-term maternity substitute while I am away. She has more than six years of teaching experience out of state, holds a teaching degree in both Language Arts and Social Studies and has substituted for me many times throughout this school year, allowing her to get to know the school, my students and the curriculum quite a bit. I have all the confidence in Mrs. Patt that she will continue to assist and prepare my students for future success in the Research Unit, the Reading OAA and in other achievements along the way. Please know that if you have any questions leading up to my maternity leave about the research unit (or anything else), that you can contact me freely at Anna.Tolin@nordoniaschools.org. Mrs. Patt's contact information will be made available when she arrives.

Thank you for taking the time to read this (lengthy) letter, and to look through the Research Paper Project description (attached papers). You will find a list of the assignments and their due dates among the attachments labeled, **"Keep this on your refrigerator!"** Please keep the bottom portion of that page at home. To confirm that your son/daughter has completed his/her first research-related assignment, **please sign the top portion, detach it, and return it to school** with your 7th grade student for credit on or **before Wednesday, March 5th**.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Tolin

Language Arts Teacher
Team Viper, Nordonia Middle School
Anna.Tolin@nordoniaschools.org

Student's Name: _____ Class Period: _____ Chosen career/Topic: _____

I, the student, understand that the Research Project Unit it will require a lot of organization and time management skills, that I will need to meet strict deadlines, and that I am expected to work hard both in school and at home on this project. I understand that failing to do so may significantly impact my 3rd quarter AND 4th quarter grade.

Student's signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: Parent's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Any comments or questions?

Cut here, detach & return the TOP PORTION ONLY to school by March 5th.

KEEP THIS ON YOUR REFRIGERATOR!

	Assignment:	Pts. Possible	Due Date	Completed?
1.	Finalize your topic & 3 sources about your topic	5- HW	Wed. 3/5/14	
2.	Parent Signature Due	5-HW	Wed. 3/5/14	
3.	Works Cited Page	10*	Thurs. 3/6/14	
4.	Research Organizer	15-HW	Tues. 3/11/14	
5.	Thesis Statement	5- HW	Thurs. 3/13/14	
6.	Typed outline	10*	Fri. 3/14/14	
	Edited Rough Drafts: <i>(see below)</i>	25-HW total		
7.	Intro paragraph RD w/ editing	5	Tues. 3/18/14	
8.	body paragraph 1 RD w/ editing	5	Wed. 3/19/14	
9.	body paragraph 2 RD w/ editing	5	Thurs, 3/20/14	
10.	body paragraph 3 RD w/ editing	5	Fri., 3/21/14	
11.	Conclusion paragraph RD w/ editing	5	Mon, 3/24/14	
12.	Final Draft	42*	Fri. 3/28/14	

TOTALS: 62* Assessment pts + 55 Homework pts.

***The Research Process (#1-11 above) will go on Quarter 3 grades. Q3 marking period ends Friday, March 28th. *The Final Draft (#12 above) will go on Quarter 4 grades.**